Access to Supports & Services

This article provides information on Governments, charitable organizations, faith communities and/or the non-profit sector that may provide services.

Too often services are directed at emergency supports rather than prevention programs that help keep people from becoming unhoused, or housing and supports to help end homelessness.

Many people experiencing homelessness face barriers in accessing services due to lack of identification (such as health cards) and/or a lack of funds (for service fees). In addition, there is evidence that many people who experience visible homelessness, or who have substance use problems or mental health challenges may be denied service or dissuaded from accessing services.

There are a variety of types of services and supports that are required to help an individual end their homelessness. These include:

1. Permanent Housing that is affordable and suitable for the individual or family. In some cases, this includes permanent supportive housing or housing with access to a variety of community supports.
2. Transitional Housing that allows for a period of adjustment and higher level support. This could include second-stage housing for women and families feeling violence, halfway houses for ex-offenders, culturally appropriate housing for Indigenous Peoples or newcomers to Canada, or housing to help long-term shelter users adjust to independent living.
3. Emergency Shelters which provide a respite from living on the street or support to those who have no options for a place to live. They can include violence against women shelters, or shelters designed for people experiencing homelessness. Ideally a community will have a variety of shelter options available to suit the unique needs of their clientele.